

30 August 2006

Response of Aurora University

Inquiry from the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security.

1. Provide a list of all appropriations received by your institution from the year 2000 to present and the amount of assistance received.

Aurora University received a single earmark of \$9,835,651. The announcement regarding the appropriation was made on 24 February 2003.

2. Please provide a summary of the specific objectives or goals set to be achieved by any entity, program, project or service associated with the appropriation at your institution, and, for each appropriation, a list of accomplishments that can be attributed

The appropriation was used to develop the facility that will house the Institute for Collaboration in Education and Health Services as well as a 200-student elementary school, offices for a local community-based wellness organization, and classrooms, laboratories and offices for selected faculty and staff. The total cost of the project exceeded \$14,800,000 with Aurora University and West Aurora School District 129 supplementing the federal funding with collars of their own. The construction project was completed this summer.

Under the auspices of the Institute, the university will expand upon its highly effective partnership with the local school district to incubate collaborative solutions to complex social problems. For example, Institute leaders currently are partnering with professionals from a wide range of nonprofit and for-profit organizations to launch the pilot phase of a city-wide after school program for middle school children.

3. How does your institution set a measure for standards to achieve quality and outcomes?

Institute projects will include provisions for the assessment of progress toward attainment of specific outcomes or standards. As the university launches its first Institute program (city-wide after school initiative), a number of qualified faculty members will serve as program evaluators on various components of the project. Data gathered through the evaluative process will be disseminated widely and will serve as the basis for programmatic improvements.

4. Does your institution have a stated policy regarding Congressional earmarks or appropriations? Does your institution have a policy regarding partnering in research projects with other universities who may have a differing policy?

Aurora University does not have a stated policy regarding earmarks. Since the university is first and foremost a teaching institution, our projects will take the form of applied or practiced-based research. We do not anticipate partnering with other universities.

5. Has your institution considered hiring a lobbyist to assist your institution in attaining familiarity with the opportunities that may exist to obtain federal funds for research – such as the earmarking process?

Aurora University does rely upon the counsel of a federal lobbying firm.

6. In conclusion, do you find Congressionally earmarked funds to have contributed in a substantive way to your academic institution?

Yes. Aurora University has benefited from the federal investment in establishment of the Institute for Collaboration. It is important to note, however, that the dollars directed to AU are being used to bring immediate benefits to a wide range of citizens in the City of Aurora, the second largest municipality in the State of Illinois. Given the distinctive demographics of the city, we are confident that models developed here will be replicable in a variety of other settings. We are therefore committed to the thoughtful dissemination of findings and will engage that opportunity fully as our citywide after school initiative matures.